Training and Retaining Child-Care Providers and Center Staff
Request for Proposals (RFP)

Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) / UC Berkeley
CALIFORNIA CHILDREN & FAMILIES COMMISSION
August, 2000

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I.   Background

The California Children and Families Commission (State Commission) approved, in January 2000, an initiative to:

- assess alternative project models aimed at expanding the number of sufficiently trained child-care providers and center staff, and
- study what kinds of monetary and professional incentives will effectively boost the retention of these teachers and caregivers.

The focus is on underserved populations, and regions/counties with the greatest scarcity of licensed providers. The Commission has funded the PACE research and development center at UC Berkeley as the lead agency for the project.

PACE has facilitated an open and objective process to determine how these general policy goals can be approached over the next two years. The principal operational activity of the initiative will involve the funding of 4-6 training projects in California that implement alternative approaches to expanding the child-care workforce, including retention of teachers and caregivers working in licensed organizations. PACE will comparatively evaluate these projects to discern their relative effectiveness over time.

In order to shape the general direction for this RFP, PACE has convened over 40 consultation meetings since January to learn about existing training programs for child-care and preschool providers. In these meetings, we have learned from a variety of individuals and organizations about what they believe are the constraints that limit the capacity and quality of existing training programs. These barriers include both limits of current training organizations, as well as the limited incentives available to individual child-care and preschool staff members that encourage them to remain committed to the field.

Changing demographics also pose a challenge to the child-care field. With more parents seeking care for infants, children with special needs, and children whose primary language is not English, providers and teachers must keep pace and possess a diverse set of skills in order to offer quality care.

Through this request for proposals (RFP), PACE will distribute about $4.2 million to training projects for child-care providers and center staff. Different training models will be funded and evaluated systematically. Rather than directly manage any training model, PACE will monitor each funded project to ensure sound implementation and consistency with State Commission objectives, and conduct the project evaluation.

Comparatively Testing Training Models
The key policy challenge is to train a sufficient number of high-quality child-care providers to help meet rising parental demand and to reduce the number of caregivers who are leaving the field at a rapid rate. The project evaluation activities will inform recommendations to the State Commission about how a stronger regional system of training and retention incentives can be constructed over the next 10 years. By learning about what works in the training field (and under what conditions), PACE will advise the State Commission as to how it can most effectively expand these initiatives. Over time, this will yield more child-care providers with stronger qualifications.

II.   Policy Aims and Barriers to Reaching these Aims

The consultation process has helped to illuminate a general consensus about how the Commission and PACE should define specific policy goals. The program intends to:

- *Recruit more, and more diverse, individuals into the field* of child development and early education. This mix of new teachers and caregivers should represent and be able to serve the diversity of children in centers, preschools, and family child-care homes.

After collecting baseline data on the composition of trainees, PACE will measure how many additional trainees were served and/or how the mix of trainees has changed since expansion.

- *Raise the rate at which child development students "graduate" from their programs*, possibly ranging from 12 units at a community college to four-year degree programs. Students' progress toward completion is often slow, due to weak supports for students and limitations of existing training programs.

PACE, in cooperation with funded projects, will collect baseline data on the trainees' "time-to-degree" (from completion of 12 units to a four-year BA), and then compare the rate of completion under the expansion or new model supported by the State Commission's funding.

- *Boost the retention of quality teachers and providers*. Training more individuals will do little to expand the child-care workforce unless monetary and professional incentives are strengthened. We must learn what mix of incentives are cost-effective, be they monetary, professional development, etc.

Our aim is not to pit projects against each other in the evaluation but rather to determine what kinds of comparable benefits they yield in terms of workforce expansion and retention. Expanded state support of a high-quality child-care and early education workforce can be advanced by solid evidence of what works.

Barriers to Reaching these Aims

Our numerous consultation meetings—ranging from the Central Valley to the Bay Area to Riverside County—have helped to delineate the key constraints that limit training organizations and individual students in their quest to contribute to the early education field. We see three major barriers, with numerous manifestations, to be addressed in proposals:

Barrier 1: Uneven organizational and community-level infrastructure to consistently train quality child-care and preschool staff members. Short-lived categorical training programs abound. But strong institutions—and creative linkages among colleges and community-based organizations—are absent from many regions in California.	• Insufficient articulation agreements among training programs within regions, limiting trainees' perception of a seamless professional development pathway. For example, poor articulation between 2 year and 4 year programs is problematic. • Uneven linkages between training organizations and employers. For instance, a lack of quality placements that match student preparation. Limited on-the-job coaching and mentoring. • Weak advocacy organizations within regions, focusing on child care workforce issues. Limited participation of county agencies, including local welfare and Prop 10 agencies. With persisting

(Barrier 1, cont'd)	constraints on revenue flows (e.g., CalWORKs[1] or APP[2] child-care subsidies), job creation and wage incentives remain constrained. The fragmentation of county-level child-care organizations continues. • Weak and under-funded programs aimed at advancing staff members' professional commitment. • Failure of financing incentives, such as additional community college average daily attendance (ADA) revenues.
Barrier 2: Weak long-term incentives to enter and stay in the field. Expansion of training capacity cannot be addressed without considering wage and professional incentives for new and incumbent staff members and caregivers.	• Low wages, lack of benefits, transportation barriers. Training alone is insufficient to eliminate recruitment difficulties or reduce turnover. • Competitive labor market in many regions of California. Rising incentives awarded to new K-12 teachers, and job growth resulting from class size reduction, draws many child development students right into the elementary grades. • Professional development: the idea that if staff members "know their job better," and feel more efficacious at work, they will become more committed to the field. • Lack of business development skills for center and family child-care home (FCCH) directors. With limited revenues, salary support remains even more constrained. • Structural financing constraints: reimbursement rates (base rate and differentials for higher quality); long waiting lists for APP support; low take-up of CalWORKs child-care subsidies; lack of cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for state-funded programs; information constraints (vacant slots in the face of overall shortage of licensed care providers).
Barrier 3: Limited access, inflexibility, and student support for training programs. Community colleges do the bulk of child development training for 12-unit and associate arts degree "graduates." These institutions are a logical base for region-wide strengthening of infrastructure and training capacity. But these programs appear to suffer from certain rigidities.	• Factors limiting the apparent accessibility of child development programs: lack of diverse full-time faculty; lack of bilingual training program or ESL classes; conventional scheduling of courses, forgoing classes at night or on weekends (or providing support services, like child care, at these times); lack of strong relationships between part-time faculty and students; lack of professional socialization; scheduling of field practicum during work hours (when many students have other jobs). • The literacy levels and academic preparation of trainees is often quite low. The ability of community colleges to effectively coordinate support services with the child development department is reportedly limited in some cases. • Limited recruitment efforts by child development programs. Resources do not follow students. • Minimum class size (25 students) for many courses. • Limited work experience, including scarce mentorship opportunities, prior to "graduation." • Weak student counseling and professional socialization, situated within the child development program or counseling office.

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[1] The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Act (CalWORKs) is the state's welfare program.

[2] Alternative Payment Programs (APPs) administer certificates for the California Department of Education's subsidized child-care programs and Stages 2 and 3 of CalWORKs child care.

(Barrier 3, cont'd)	• Very little data on student graduation rates, reasons for students dropping out, and job destinations of former students. • Some short-term training programs—often focused on quality, not expansion of the workforce—are sprouting in various regions of the state. But often there are difficulties in getting courses approved through the community colleges. Linkages to the credential matrix and long-term effects also may not be strong.

III.   Desired Outcomes: Evaluation

The Commission is interested in determining what training models and components are most effective in producing more child-care providers and center staff who possess the necessary skills to advance young children's development and improve the quality of care. To this end, PACE will examine measurable outcomes over time, working closely with the regional projects funded under this program.

Baseline and Change Over a Two-Year Period
The first part of the evaluation will be to assess the extent to which the Commission's funding can improve the number and quality of 'graduates' nurtured and produced by the project. Early in the funding period PACE researchers will work with the staff of funded projects to determine [1] the background and diversity of trainees or students currently being served, [2] the rate at which trainees complete their program prior to the Commission's new funding, [3] the level of training that has been received, and [4] the extent to which graduates have entered and remained in the child development field for at least one year, and [5] whether graduates are entering fields of high need, including classrooms with children with special developmental needs, infants, and children with limited English.

PACE will then develop, in consultation with the network of funded projects, a plan for assessing change in these measurable features of the projects. PACE's current authorization allows for this tracking of progress over the initial 12 months of the projects. PACE may contract with an independent organization to provide technical assistance to the projects to help maximize their effectiveness.

Comparative Assessment of Funded Projects
The regional projects receiving funding by the Commission may be quite different in their training priorities, the trainees served, and in their training methods. Nothing in this RFP is meant to discourage innovation or a focus on particular populations or needs. However, a common set of observable outcomes will be developed to allow an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the various training strategies. Of particular interest is the ability of projects to [1] support steady progress towards graduation of additional child-care and preschool staff with adequate skill levels, [2] raise the quality of graduates' skills and social proficiencies in providing developmentally rich experiences for young children, and [3] encourage the retention of graduates in the field. We do not expect all funded projects to address all three of these outcomes with equal emphasis. But proposals must specify how they will address a subset, or all, of these objectives.

PACE will work closely with funded projects to design a qualitative substudy that tracks how local project staff are implementing their programs and fostering the development of infrastructure.

IV.   Grant Guidelines

PACE will allocate funds to training projects that serve regions of the state with particularly scarce supplies of licensed child-care programs, to expand parents' access to quality child care in neighborhoods with acute shortages. While the focus is on projects that offer unit-bearing courses, other promising models will not necessarily be excluded.

Scope of Work
Organizations applying for funds are expected to implement and participate in an evaluation that will make progress towards the goals described above. Driven by these policy aims, initiatives must demonstrate efficacy in [1] producing additional child-care providers and center staff, [2] graduating students in a timely way / improving their capacity to deliver higher quality child-care services at their workplaces and [3] serving to retain these new caregivers within the child-care and early education field.

While PACE will be assessing the relative cost effectiveness of training models, we hope that bidders will be creative in developing initiatives. For example, we would not dissuade projects that are considering adding a practicum or creating an incentive for 4-year degree candidates, even though this strategy may appear costly in the short term.

A. Core components of training projects (proposals MUST contain these):
- Projects that have regional impact (county or within county areas with demonstrated shortages of licensed care or providers) in recruiting additional trainees
- Projects that place trainees on career pathways leading to further education, professional growth advisement, and advancement on the child development matrix. Although primarily for licensed providers, this wouldn't exclude individual trainees who are not licensed.
- Training that builds ongoing local and statewide capacity and infrastructure for high-quality coordinated training and retention efforts, with a clear plan of collaboration. For example, commitment to link with county efforts aimed at raising incentives for child-care or collaborate with local welfare agencies to facilitate recipient participation.
- Training that includes creative and affordable retention incentives
- Projects that incorporate principles of inclusion and diversity
- Projects that are accessible to trainees

B. Desirable components of training projects (proposals are strongly ENCOURAGED to include these):
- Ensuring effective provider practice as defined in current research
- Fostering accreditation
- Including program standards defined by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and incorporating the competencies

- Strengthening links to support systems in ways that boost the retention rates of trainees such as marketing and business planning for family child care providers, and pathways to employment for center staff
- On-the-job coaching/mentoring component
- Cost effectiveness
- Addressing training gaps such as children with special needs; infant/toddler issues; school readiness; literacy; family coordinated services; provider and staff roles in fostering strong relationships with parents; prevention of abuse/neglect and care for children who have experienced other traumas; mental health issues; and/or training for administration
- Linking with college/university child development programs

Who May Apply
PACE intends to contract with existing agencies that will develop and/or expand quality training to child-care providers or center staff, or serve as the lead agency for a collaborative project. Proposals will be considered from, but not limited to: for-profit, non-profit and public agencies; colleges and universities; or groups of organizations such as family child-care provider/center networks or associations.

Applicants must be willing to actively participate in a formative and summative evaluation effort that will 1) track implementation processes (including data collection and reporting and using evaluation information to make project modifications during implementation), 2) follow trainees through the projects and into the employment and/or the establishment of home business, 3) examine the retention of existing providers/center staff, and 4) assess the relative cost-effectiveness of training models. The project must be driven by the policy aims.

Funded initiatives also will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports (including fiscal, narrative and statistical reports, as well as evaluation of impact) to PACE. Projects will be required to notify PACE of any key staff changes and obtain approval for line item budget changes over 10% and significant program modifications. Each applicant must agree to actively participate in the PACE evaluation activities by providing all information requested in the reports and complying with any special requests for information on trainees. In addition, funded organizations must agree to participate in any evaluation activities required by the State Commission.

Availability of Funds
PACE intends to distribute approximately $4.2 million for activities under this RFP. The maximum grant size for any one initiative is $1 million. The average grant may be less.

Budget Implications for Funded Projects
To help support these evaluation activities, all bidders must earmark at least $50,000 over the two-year life of project to support a local staff person who will work with PACE on these evaluation tasks, help collect local data, and organize focus groups and other meetings that contribute to the evaluation. This must be at least one-half of the staff persons scope of work. This person should have some training in evaluation and research methods.

Contract Term
The currently authorized contract term will begin November 1, 2000 and end February 28, 2002. Projects may be extended dependent on additional funding.

Process for Assessing Proposed Projects
In addition to key components described above, applicants also will be judged on the following project elements:

- A process for assessing the local need for additional providers and/or center staff to ensure optimal
chances for employment in centers or successful operation of a family child care business because of local demand for care, the availability of parents who can pay for care, or subsidies for parents who are unable to pay the costs.

- A proven track record in terms of training family child care providers and/or center staff, leading to successful job placement or successful establishment of a home-based business.

- Evidence that the project does not supplant, replace or weaken existing local training models.

- Evidence of recruitment methods that yield well-qualified entrants into training projects. This should include ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic sensitivity in recruiting new trainees who can work with under-served populations in low-income communities.

- Capacity to train an additional number of students in a quality project that addresses the CTC program standards and competencies.

Proposals will be evaluated and the contracts awarded in the following manner:

- All proposals will be reviewed to determine whether they meet the content and format requirements specified in the RFP.

- All proposals meeting the content and format requirements will then be submitted to the PACE selection committee, which will evaluate the proposals based on criteria specified above. The selection committee members will independently score each proposal and the separate scores will be accumulated for an overall score for each proposal. All proposals and evaluation sheets shall be available for public inspection at the conclusion of the selection process.

V.   General Proposal Instructions

All proposals must be submitted according to the application guidelines. They must be prepared with the following outline:

A. Cover sheet with name and contact information for contact person
B. Initiative abstract (no more than 1 page)
C. Table of contents
D. Project narrative (must not exceed 10 pages):
    1. Articulation of barriers to be addressed by the project, with needs/resources assessment.
    2. Initiative design (objectives, services provided, and timeline).
    3. Organizational structure and implementation plan, including how to recruit trainees for January 2001 and to organize the resources necessary to complete this contract. The content must demonstrate your appropriateness, readiness, and ability to provide the services set forth in this RFP. Include the current and proposed organizational structure, staff, and functions proposed to be utilized, including identification of each service or subcontractor. Include an organizational chart that identifies staff to provide the services requested in this RFP. Include specific plans for recruitment, training and retention.
E. Appendices (no more than 15 pages)
    1. 501(c)(3) documentation of tax-exempt not-for-profit status and evidence that CDD contracts are not on conditional status, if applicable.
    2. Job descriptions for all staff to be included in the proposed project, with experience, knowledge and training of staff in all pertinent areas required for this project.
    3. Line item budget information (note that indirect costs may not exceed 5%).
    4. Staff qualifications, short bios, and job descriptions (including professional to work on the evaluation with PACE).
    5. Memoranda of understanding with partners, with clear descriptions of the role of these collaborators.

<u>Submission</u>
All proposal narratives must be submitted on standard white paper, 8 1/2" x 11" in size, single-spaced, 12 point, one inch margins on sides, top and bottom, with each page clearly and consecutively numbered, beginning with page one of the proposal narrative. Staple each copy of the proposal in the upper left corner. Do not use binders or folders. Elaborate artwork and expensive paper and bindings, expensive visual or other presentations are neither necessary nor desired.

Proposals must be submitted received by 5pm on October 6, 2000. Proposals will be automatically disqualified if not received by that time (via email, fax or mail). Send to:

Elizabeth Burr, Project Director
PACE
School of Education
3653 Tolman Hall
Berkeley, CA 94720-1670
510-642-7223
510-642-9148 (fax)
elizburr@uclink4.berkeley.edu

<u>Assistance with Proposal Preparation</u>
There are two ways in which potential applicants can obtain assistance with the preparation of proposals.

Questions of a technical nature can be directed in writing to Elizabeth Burr at the email address listed above. Questions will be addressed within 5 business days.

PACE will offer four bidders conferences during the last week in August. The workshops are designed to provide an overview of the RFP and to answer questions its content. Questions and answers from these conferences will be available to the public on paper. The dates and locations of these conferences are listed in the timeline below. Please call Regina Burley at PACE (510-642-7223) if you would like a map faxed to you.

VII.   Timeline

August 25   RFP released

August 29   Bidders Conference, Sacramento (1:00-3:00pm)
               State Library, Room 220
               914 Capitol Mall
               Sacramento, CA 95814

August 30   Bidders Conference, Fresno (9:30-11:30)
               Library Conference Room
               Fresno City College
               1101 E. University Avenue
               Fresno, CA 93741-0001

August 31   Bidders Conference, Riverside (1:00-3:00pm)
               Early Childhood Studies Building, Room 132AB
               Riverside Community College
               4800 Magnolia Avenue
               Riverside, CA 92506-1293

September 1   Bidders Conference, Los Angeles (9:30-11:30am)
               Crystal Stairs
               5105 West Goldleaf Circle
               Los Angeles, CA 90056

October 6   Proposals due

October 27   Awards made

January 2   Projects begin

Appendix 1
Consultation Process

Since February 2000, PACE has been meeting with representatives from key statewide agencies and organizations involved in center staff and family child-care provider training to help shape and focus the overall approach to the initiative. PACE staff also met with directors of training programs, child care advisory boards and planning councils, R&R agencies, and other stakeholders and experts in formal educational programs and informal training in the early care and education field. These meetings were held in Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Los Angeles, Marin, Merced, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Not only did we invite feedback on the process and progress to date, but we also encouraged participants to spread the word about the project and suggest future meetings to convene. To include as many people as possible, we sent a letter (via post and email) to over 1200 individuals describing our project, again asking for input.

Below is a list of groups convened, followed by the list of questions asked:
Child-Care Health Consultants
Child-Care Provider Associations
Child Development Training Consortium
City and State Agencies
      California Department of Education
      California Department of Social Services
      Child-Care Advisory Boards
      City Commissions for Children, Youth and Their Families
      Commission on Teacher Credentialing
      Head Start
      Housing Authority
      Local Prop 10 commissions
      Local planning councils
Community-Based Organizations
      Community centers and community improvement organizations
      Local faith-based organizations
      Mentor programs
      Housing project associations
      Regional trainers
Community College Chancellors Office
Community College Students
Faculty and adjunct faculty: Cal State University, Community College, and University of California
Local Child-Care Coordinators
Organizations serving specific populations
      CalWORKs participants
      Spanish-speaking providers, Asian providers
      Caregivers for children with special needs
Resource & Referral Agencies

Below is a list of questions used to guide our meetings.

Question 1 – **What do we need to learn about existing training programs to understand their scope and effectiveness?**

- What are the characteristics of trainees being served in existing pre-service and in-service programs? How useful is this distinction between programs?

- How are trainees recruited into training programs? Are recruitment strategies culturally appropriate? Do they attract a diverse group of trainees? Are training programs accessible to trainees in terms of scheduling and location?

- What are the major components of the training program? What support services are available to students/trainees? How comprehensive and appropriate are the services offered? How do these services contribute to the success of the program?

- What are the components of the training curriculum? How was the curriculum developed? What is the rationale for the curriculum? How does the curriculum relate a core body of knowledge for various positions to current research defining quality and best practice?   How will the training relate to/be linked to the State's new permit matrix, desired outcomes, pre-kindergarten learning guidelines, and early literacy programs?

- How do designers of the training programs learn about what employers are looking for in new staff members? Does the program demonstrate awareness of current and prospective marketplace conditions and forces?

- What are the intended outcomes of the training program, both for the trainee and for the future employer? Does the training program have any formal systematic process for assessing achievement of intended outcomes (e.g., exit interviews with graduates, follow up with employers)?

- Are there innovative delivery systems or program designs that show promise for training and retaining providers/center staff in areas of low supply? In areas where parents are limited in their ability to pay for care? What methods and techniques are used to deliver services to low-income communities, and linguistically and culturally isolated providers? Are there programs that are particularly effective in training diverse groups of providers/center staff?

- What is the program's retention rate through graduation? Does the program track who drops out, when and why? Does the program have a process for getting feedback from participants and graduates about its effectiveness? Does the program offer post-graduate resources, support and mentoring, technical assistance? Does the program measure its own impact on the effectiveness with children of the providers it trains?

- What are the major "cost centers' in operating existing or new training programs? How do these costs differ among types of programs?

Question 2 – **What criteria should be used in selecting high-quality training models and specific local programs for participation and funding through this initiative?**

- A process for assessing the local need for additional providers and/or center staff to ensure optimal chances for employment in centers or successful operation of a family child care business because of local demand for care, the availability of parents who can pay for care, or subsidies for parents who are unable to pay the costs.

- A proven track record in terms of training family child care providers and/or center staff, leading to successful job placement or successful establishment of a home-based business.

- Evidence that the program does not supplant, replace or weaken existing local training models.

- Evidence of recruitment methods that yield well-qualified entrants into training programs. This should include ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic sensitivity in recruiting new trainees who can work with under-served populations in low-income communities.

- A willingness to actively participate in a formative and summative evaluation effort that will track implementation processes (including data collection and reporting and using formative evaluation information to make program modifications during implementation), follow trainees through the programs and into the employment and/or the establishment of home business, examine the retention of existing providers/center staff, and assess the relative cost-effectiveness of training models.

- A commitment to link with county efforts aimed at raising incentives for child-care providers/center staff who pursue in-service training programs.

- A training curriculum or materials that address the Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and incorporate the "Competencies for the Various Levels of the Child Development Permit".

Appendix 2
Sample Budget:Training and Retaining Child Care Providers and Center Staff

Budget 11/1/00-2/28/02

Name of Agency
Contact Information

Personnel	$
Benefits	$
Training Activities	$
Equipment	$
Materials and Supplies	$
Travel	$
Indirect costs (may not exceed 5%)	$
Other (list as separate line item)	$
Matching funds	$
Total Budget	*$*